



## O N O U R S H O R T L I S T

## Pop Star

*Wendy Kaufman's niche is a soft-drink pitch—the Snapple Lady.*

Wendy Kaufman had a teenage television crush on Greg Brady of *The Brady Bunch*. She thought he was just the greatest, so she wrote him a fan letter. He never responded.

Some 20 years later, Kaufman, more widely known as the "Snapple Lady," receives more than 2,000 fan letters a week. Each one is answered. The letters are often incredible, says Kaufman, the TV spokesperson for Snapple soft drinks. People have credited Snapple

Kaufman, who earned a dual bachelor's degree in sociology and film from SU in 1980, lives in New York City and travels nationwide, visiting Snapple distributors and promoting the beverage. She's thrown out the first pitch at three major league baseball games, participated in numerous parades, and met thousands of Snapple drinkers.

She visited SU last fall and had dinner with students who had written to her. She attended the high school graduation of a young New Mexico man who credited Snapple with helping him

complete his coursework. She regularly receives invitations to birthday parties and weddings. This spring, she says she'll be the only 36-year-old at a New Jersey high school prom.

Kaufman also receives plenty of gifts—they range from surfboards to lamps and miniature boats made from Snapple cans and labels—in addition to some more serious correspondence. She gets letters from lonely people looking for a friend. And when rock star Kurt Cobain committed suicide last year, she received more than a dozen letters from despondent teenagers.

Although she has no sure-fire explanation for her popularity, Kaufman believes it has something to do with her less-than-perfect appearance. "You can enjoy Snapple without having to be a size 4, without having to be a perfect person," she says. "That has been the biggest gift to me because now I'm starting to be a role model for people

who have esteem issues."

Kaufman used to reply to each letter by hand. Today, she handles between 200 and 300 letters a week (assistants help out with the others). One pen pal recently sent her a picture of himself naked with a note that said he liked to drink his favorite natural drink *au naturel*. She sent him a tee-shirt and this response: "Cover up, Snapple is a family drink."

—ANDREA C. MARSH



In her role as the Snapple Lady, 1980 graduate Wendy Kaufman receives more than 2,000 fan letters a week. She credits her popularity, in part, to her appearance. "You can enjoy Snapple without being a size 4," she says, "without having to be a perfect person."

with helping them meet and marry and for saving their lives—Snapple was used to douse a fire. One couple gave their son the middle name of Snapple.

"People kept sharing these experiences with me and I began to realize that Snapple was more than just a drink. It had become a personality," says Kaufman. "I don't exactly understand why, but I know from 2,000 letters a week that it must be happening."



## Taking Flight

Eileen Collins '78

Eileen Collins grew up dreaming more about planes than proms, focusing her attention on take-offs, landings, and books about pilots. "I never really got into teenage romance novels," says Collins. "I just wanted to read about flying."

She wanted to fly herself, but coming from a family of modest means, she never expected to have the opportunity. She certainly never anticipated the event that occurred in February, when she became the first woman astronaut to pilot a NASA space shuttle.

The eight-day mission capped 17 years of preparation since Collins' 1978 graduation from Syracuse University, where a full-tuition Air Force ROTC scholarship enabled her to matriculate and earn a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the College of Arts and Sciences.

Between her junior and senior years at SU, Collins used \$1,000 in savings to fund her first flying lessons. From SU she went to Air Force undergraduate pilot training in Vance, Oklahoma, where she was one of four women among 300-plus male students. She became an aircraft commander and pilot instructor and was selected for the astronaut program in 1990 while attending the Air Force Test Pilot School at California's Edwards Air Force Base.

Before her flight on the shuttle *Discovery*, Collins deflected questions about being the first female pilot, insisting she was too focused on her training to dwell on the subject.

"If you think about it too much you start to worry," she said. "What if I make a mistake? Am I going to be letting people down? I try to keep it in the back of my mind so I can focus on doing my job right."

The first female shuttle pilot doesn't expect to be the last. "I am often asked why we haven't had a woman shuttle pilot before now, and the main reason is we haven't had women who've had the credentials to apply to the astronaut program and compete with men," says



Eileen Collins became the first woman to pilot a NASA space shuttle during a February mission aboard *Discovery*.

Collins. "Nowadays, we have enough women pilots in the military and enough women pilots with experience in test flights to compete to be astronauts. We will have more women pilots."

—BOB HILL



## DESERT FOX

➤ *In a country teeming* with oil-rich royals, Saudi Arabian Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Alsaud has made billions primarily through business investments. The 37-year-old prince oversees an empire with interests in construction, banking, travel, real estate, and retailing. He owns 11 percent of Saks Fifth Avenue and recently invested more than \$400 million in the faltering Euro Disney, buying shares for just 20 percent of market value.

He lives the royal life: a 130-room mansion in Riyadh, a private Boeing 727, a fabulous yacht. He says his love for high quality led him to Syracuse University, where he received a master's degree from the Maxwell School in 1985. "The master of social science program was excellent, and the help I got from Michael Barkun, the faculty chair, gave me great experience."

— Kirk Albrecht



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— Francis Bacon  
*Meditationes Sacrae*, 1597

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## Senator Pothole

*Alfonse D'Amato '59, G'61*

Few Republicans emerged from last fall's mid-term elections with power comparable to New York's junior senator, Alfonse D'Amato, who chairs the Senate Banking Committee, the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee, and the Transportation Appropriations Committee, and is widely credited with installing both a new state senate majority leader and governor in New York.

The senator, who graduated from SU's School of Management in 1959 and College of Law in 1961, pooh-poohs the latter assertion. "Governor George Pataki is captain of the team. I'm the cheerleader," D'Amato told CNN's *Evans & Novak*. "He's got the ball. If he does the kind of things he indicated he would do—cut spending, sign the death penalty into law, get recidivist criminals off the street—by gosh, I'm going to be cheering for him, and all New Yorkers will."

D'Amato once chose the nickname "Senator Pothole" to illustrate his close attention to his constituents' needs, a strategy that paid off following his first senatorial win in 1980, when he nar-



New York Senator Alfonse D'Amato gained considerable clout after November's mid-term elections.

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rowly defeated Jacob Javits and Elizabeth Holtzman. By 1986, his margin of victory grew to 650,000 votes.

D'Amato's visibility has soared with his leadership of the Senate's hearings into the murky depths of Whitewater. Aware of public opinion polls that reflect boredom and a suspicion of impropriety rather than criminality on the part of President Clinton—and mindful of his new stature—D'Amato has promised sober consideration of the case. In addition, the senator's list of Congressional priorities includes cutting the capital gains tax rate, reducing the budget deficit, cutting spending, and "showing people we're moving in the right direction."

D'Amato's rise has not been universally lauded. Even before the current cycle of extreme political nastiness, D'Amato's brand of swaggering populism made him the target of merciless derision in many quarters. Despite recurring ethical clouds that occasionally cast shadows on D'Amato's career, his hide remains as tough as his rhetoric. He is nothing if not resilient.

—GEORGE LOWERY

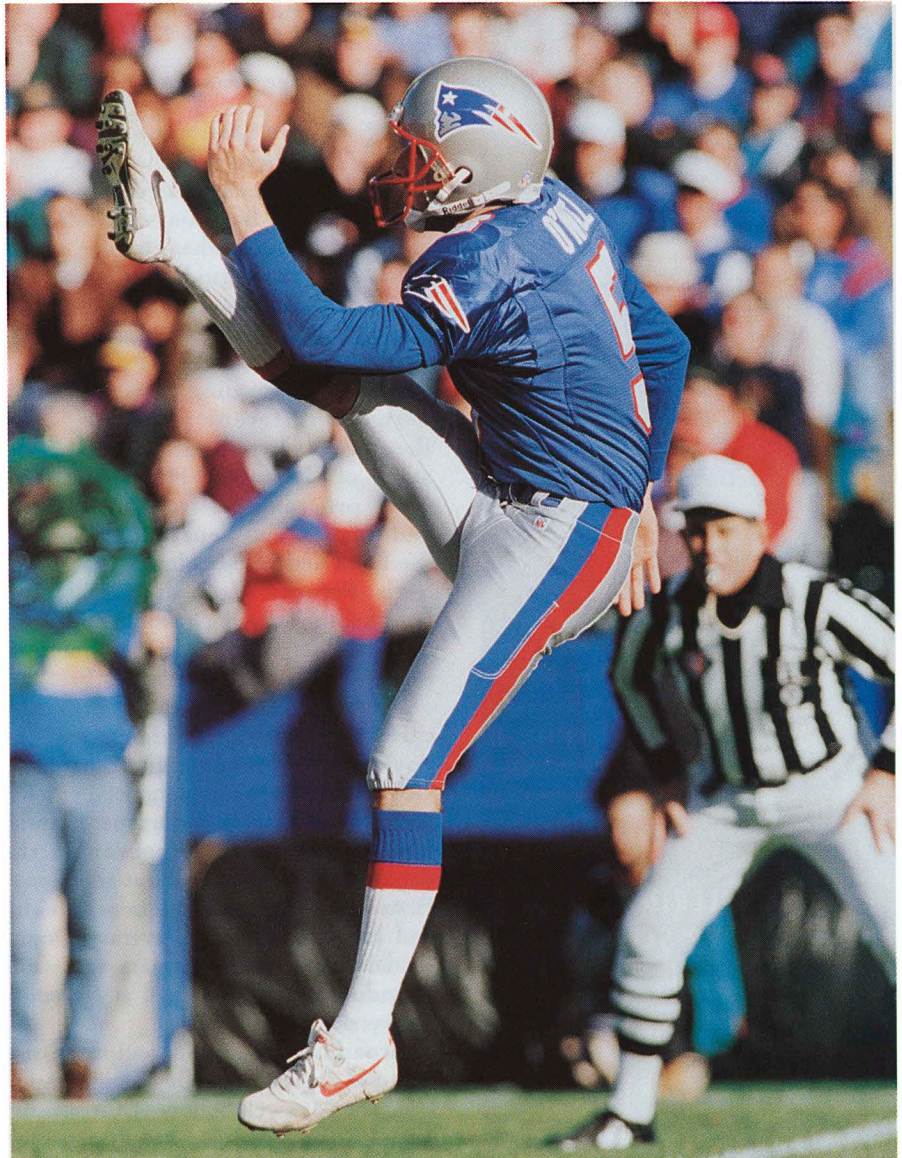
## Patriot Games

Pat O'Neill '94

One of the scrapbook moments of the New England Patriots' drive to the National Football League playoffs began with Pat O'Neill, the team's rookie punter, long-range field-goal specialist, and designated scholar (more on that later).

Late in the third quarter of a December game against the New York Jets, O'Neill pretended to line up for a 50-yard field-goal attempt. He instead punted the ball past the surprised Jets. The ball was downed at the 1-yard-line, placing the Jets in a precarious position. The Patriots took complete advantage of their opponent's predicament three plays later, intercepting a pass and returning it for the go-ahead touchdown in a 24-13 victory.

O'Neill was the only rookie starter on a team that won its final seven regular-season games and qualified for post-season play for the first time since 1986.



Pat O'Neill gets his kicks on the football field and in the classroom—he's a first-semester doctoral student at SU.

"There were points where I could have done better this season," he says, "but I did my best, I learned a lot, and I'm trying to improve."

For most professional athletes, even ordinary ones, off-season demands typically amount to two-hour daily workouts sandwiched between whatever strikes one's fancy—golf, tennis, traveling. O'Neill's off-season regimen includes a full load of graduate classes. He earned a bachelor's degree in bio-engineering from SU last spring and is embarking on his first semester as a doctoral student at the University's

Institute for Sensory Research. He has a fellowship to pursue an advanced degree in neuroscience, a senior thesis to be published this year as part of a larger article in the journal *Visual Neuroscience*, and a future that may require flexibility.

"I'm not sure how long it'll take me to get the degree while playing football, and I'm not sure what I'm going to do with it, although it could lead to a faculty position at a university," says O'Neill. "I do know I want to take full advantage of this opportunity to play football while I have it." —BOB HILL



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## ON OUR SHORT LIST

### A People Person

Walter Broadnax G'75

Walter Broadnax would be lost without the blue index card he pockets every working day. The card, lined on each side with meetings he must either chair or attend, is his daily map, guiding him through his hectic schedule as deputy secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

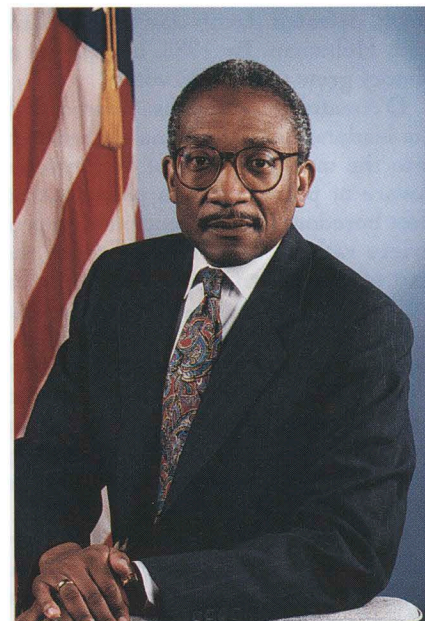
"I'm always going back and forth between different meetings," says Broadnax, who oversees the daily operations of Health and Human Services' many programs for women, children, and infants, and departments such as the Food and Drug Administration and Social Security. He is also in charge of coordinating the department's regional and field activities and maintaining its relations with individual states.

Broadnax's concerns focus on health care reform, welfare reform, and the government's restructuring process. "Right now there's an enhanced emphasis on streamlining government, and I have been the chief person in the department to worry about this," says Broadnax, who met his boss, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, more than 20 years ago while attending graduate school at Syracuse University.

Broadnax, the 1975 recipient of a doctoral degree in public administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, has long been involved in the public sector, including a four-year stint as president of the New York State Civil Service Commission. Before his 1993 presidential appointment, he served as president of the Center for Governmental Research, a nonprofit research and management consulting organization in Rochester, New York.

In spite of his job's hectic nature, he finds his current role immensely satisfying. "It's gratifying when you clearly understand just how important a role this department plays in the lives of the American people," says Broadnax. "It truly is, as the secretary calls it, the people's department."

—ANDREA C. MARSH



Walter Broadnax is deputy secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

### A Wonderful Life

Sheldon Leonard '29

Sheldon Leonard returned to Syracuse last September to collect honors from the city he called home from 1925 to 1929. Hundreds of people gathered outside the Landmark Theatre on South Salina Street to see Leonard inducted into the Syracuse Walk of Stars, the Salt City's version of that star-studded Hollywood sidewalk. The four-year-old event honors show-business greats who've lived in Onondaga County. Many, like Leonard, attended Syracuse University.

Leonard came to SU on a football scholarship in 1925. When a coaching change relegated him to the bench, he turned to campus theater for kicks and took his coaching from drama professor Sawyer Falk. A sociology major who had counted on a promised job in a brokerage house, Leonard graduated on the eve of the stock market crash. The job dissolved and the would-be broker discovered his college acting experience was his best ticket to employment.

"People went to the theater almost therapeutically during the worst days of



the Depression," says Leonard. "The theater prospered even as the rest of the economy was failing. There were plenty of jobs."

Leonard was a Broadway regular by 1932. Movies followed quickly, including a role as the bartender in the 1946 holiday classic, *It's a Wonderful Life*. Leonard appeared in more than 140 films before moving on to television. Again, his timing was perfect. "I came on board when it was easy to get a foothold," Leonard says. "They needed me, they needed material, they needed things I wrote. They were starving for scripts."

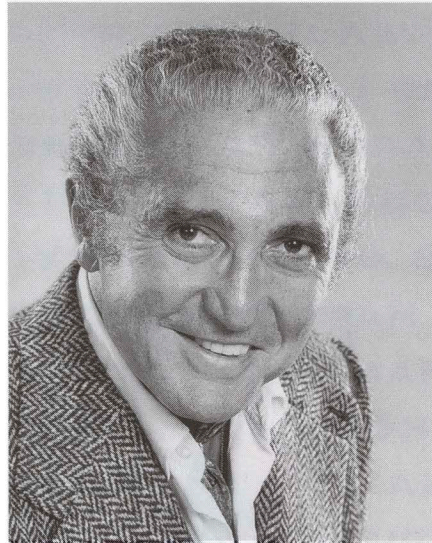
Leonard answered the need well, creating classics like *The Dick Van Dyke Show*; *The Andy Griffith Show*; *Lassie*; *My Favorite Martian*; *Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.*; and *I Spy*. When he insisted on casting a young stand-up comic named Bill Cosby as a lead character in *I Spy*, he opened the network television door for African-American actors.

Though his career has slowed considerably, the 88-year-old Leonard is still captivated by the profession that has

always welcomed him.

"For more than half a century, I have been well paid for doing what I would have gladly done for nothing," Leonard says. "Of all the professional activities I can imagine, this is the most satisfying and gratifying."

—LAURIE ROOT HARRINGTON



Sheldon Leonard's many television credits include *I Spy*, for which he once traveled to Japan with stars Bill Cosby and Robert Culp (in back) to direct an episode. Leonard, a 1929 graduate, has also appeared in more than 140 movies.

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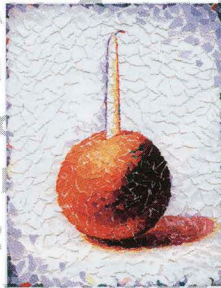
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